

District 7–Downtown Los Angeles US 101 Cap Concept Study

Project Summary

Caltrans District 7 engaged MIG to collaborate with area stakeholders and EDAW in collecting stakeholder input on a proposal to cap US 101 in downtown Los Angeles. Student interns, managed by EDAW, participated in a community-based visioning process, to develop a range of ideas for an innovative, context-sensitive urban design concept for the site.



Outreach Methods

- Stakeholder interviews: elected officials, community leaders, city officials
- Los Angeles Times Op-Ed
- Extended outreach through Neighborhood Councils
- Web communication: blogs



Public Involvement Tools

Neighborhood Meetings

EDAW staff invited neighborhood representatives from specific groups, such as El Pueblo and the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council. These participants provided resource presentations and critiqued student products.

“On-the-Street” Interviews

Interns spent one day in the field interviewing residents and business owners from Chinatown and Boyle Heights, whose comments were then integrated into the final presentation.

Lectures and Panel Discussions

During lectures and panel discussions, private, non-profit, and public agency representatives with expertise in the history of Los Angeles, historic resources, urban design, local demographics, and other applicable topics were brought in to share their knowledge regarding the project area and surrounding context. Interns and experts shared questions and answers.

Environmental Justice Community Involvement

The community outreach component of the internship program for the Downtown Los Angeles US 101 Cap Concept Study was intended to “...energize the efforts of stakeholders and city agencies and engage the residents and business owners of adjacent neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Angelino Heights, El Pueblo, Boyle Heights, Civic Center and Little Tokyo...” These neighborhoods include residents with significant ethnic, cultural, and language diversity.

During the development of the internship program, EDAW did considerable “groundwork” in meeting with city and elected officials and their staffs to identify potential topics of concern for discussion. EDAW staff also made efforts to engage organizations that serve diverse communities, including El Pueblo and the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council.



Lessons Learned

Professionals and politicians were well-represented throughout the process and their involvement shaped how the interns came to understand the site, and the overarching social and political context. Greater involvement of community representatives throughout the process would increase student understanding of residents’ concerns about how best to design the site to meet their needs for parks and community amenities. This early involvement can also affect how

the project proceeds through local approval and implementation processes.



Results

The conceptual plans produced by interns, along with MIG’s extended outreach recommendations, will assist civic leaders, city planners, and transportation officials in further advancing urban revitalization goals in the future development of the 101 Freeway Cap concept.



Deliverables

Meeting Summaries
Conceptual Plan
Final Project Report